(b) and (c) As on November 21, 2001, the vacancies in the Supreme Court and the High Courts are as below:

Supreme Court	—	1
High Courts	—	170 (including 47 new posts)

(d) The procedure for appointment of Judges of the Supreme Court of India and Chief Justices and Judges of High Courts as well as transfer of a Judge, including Chief Justice from one High Court to another, has been laid down in the Supreme Court Judgement of October 6, 1993 read with their Advisory Opinion of October 28, 1998. Government has been addressing letters to the Chief Ministers of the States and the Chief Justices of the High Courts, from time to time, requesting them to make recommendations for appointment of Judges in the High Courts with a view to filling up vacancies expeditiously.

Non-Payment of dividends to shareholders

849. SHRI RAJEEV SHUKLA : Will the Minister of LAW, JUSTICE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that 80 per cent of profit making companies are suspected to be faulty in the payment of dividends to shareholders;

(b) if so, who is responsible for the unchecked irregularities; and

(c) the steps Government propose to streamline the procedure to avoid recurrence of such lapses in future?

THE MINISTER OF LAW, JUSTICE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS (SHRI ARUN JAITELY): (a) to (c) If any company fails to pay dividend after its declaration, the company and its directors can be prosecuted under section 205A and 207 of the Companies Act, 1956 by the Department of Company Affairs, when it comes to the Department's notice.

Fast Track Courts

850. SHRI N.K. PREMACHANDRAN : Will the Minister of LAW, JUSTICE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) how many Fast Track Courts have started functioning throughout the country;

(b) the number of courts alongwith classification therefore, State-wise;

(c) the reasons for the inordinate delay in starting the Fast Track Courts; and

(d) the reaction of the Government thereto?

THE MINISTER OF LAW, JUSTICE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS (SHRI ARUN JAITELY): (a) and (b) As per available information 862 Fast Track Courts have been set up out of which, 542 courts have started functioning in the country.

State-wise information is given in the Statement *(See* below*)*.

(c) and (d) It is for the respective State Governments in consultation with the concerned High Courts to set up Fast Track Courts in the States. Setting up of a new court involves construction of a court room, appointment of a Judge with supporting staff and provision of computers and other facilities necessary for the functioning of the court. These courts are, therefore, being set up in a phased manner. However, the Central Government has been periodically writing to the State Governments for expediting setting up of Fast Track Courts in States. In the recently held conference of the State Law/Home Secretaries on 30.10.2001 in the Department of Justice, this issue was discussed in detail and the State Governments were impressed upon to set up earmarked number of Fast Track Courts at the earliest preferably by 31st December, 2001.

Statement

No. of Fast Track Courts Functioning in Various States in the Country

Sl. No.	Name of High Court	No. of courts functioning
1.	Andhra Pradesh	25
2.	Arunachal Pradesh	—
3.	Assam	15
4.	Bihar	37
5.	Chhattisgarh	11
6.	Goa	—
7.	Gujarat	—
8.	Haryana	—
9.	Himachal Pradesh	—
10.	Jammu & Kashmir	40
11.	Jharkhand	—
12.	Karnataka	8
13.	Kerala	1
14.	Madhya Pradesh	64

Sl. No.	Name of High Court	No. of courts functioning
15.	Maharashtra	94
16.	Manipur	2
17.	Meghalaya	—
18.	Mizoram	—
19.	Nagaland	—
20.	Orissa	17
21.	Punjab	—
22.	Rajasthan	40
23.	Sikkim	—
24.	Tamil Nadu	—
25.	Tripura	2
26.	Uttaranchal	30
27.	Uttar Pradesh	150
28.	West Bengal	6
		542

Comprehensive Bill on Electoral Reforms

†851. SHRIMATI BASANTI SARMA: Will the Minister of LAW, JUSTICE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have framed any comprehensive Bill on electoral reforms in view of the present conditions in the counry;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) if not, the reasons therefor; and

(d) by when the said Bill is likely to be introduced?

THE MINISTER OF LAW, JUSTICE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS (SHRI ARUN JAITLEY): (a) to (d) The process of reform of electoral laws is a continuous and ongoing process. It is necessary to evolve a consensus among the political parties if a comprehensive legislation for electoral reforms is to be brought forward, which is a time consuming process. Hence, the Government has been bringing forward various legislations to enact proposals in this regard as and when political consensus has been reached on different issues so that the

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.